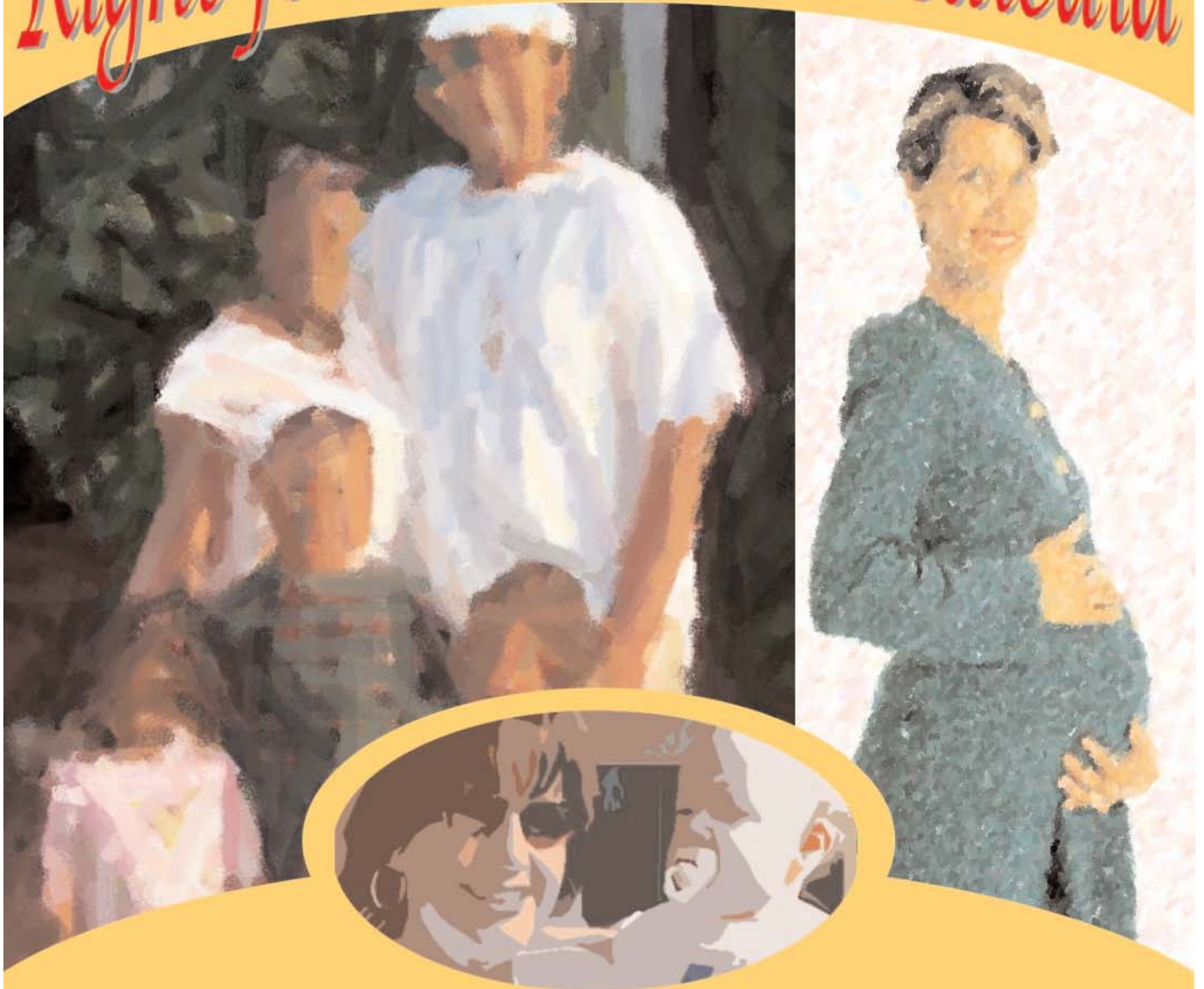


ANNUAL REPORT 2003-2004



**Special 10 Year
Anniversary
Edition**

Right from the Start Medicaid



**Educating and Empowering
Families to be Healthy**

Director's Message



Jon Anderson

When new parents look upon their baby, they often wonder if they will be able to introduce their little pride and joy to the wonders of the world. They hope their child will never want for the basic necessities of life such as food, shelter and clothing. Before the baby is born they pray for ten fingers and ten toes, and excellent health in between.

In most cases their prayers are answered, but other anxieties arise: will my child stay healthy, and if not, will I be able to afford the care she needs?

As the director of Right from the Start Medicaid Outreach Project for the last six years, I have seen many parents (including parents of adult children) agonize over this question. Whether they have been burdened by financial hard times or an unexpected illness, they are always relieved to discover that the state of Georgia has not let them down.

The state has been under great pressure in the last year to cut back on costs in Medicaid and PeachCare for Kids spending, and lots of difficult decisions had to be made. But difficult times often bring out the best in people. This was especially true for my staff. Although some caseloads nearly tripled this year, most of them stayed on board for the long ride ahead. They never lost sight of the mission, making sure all those who were in need and eligible got comprehensive health care coverage.

Although the project's role has expanded to serve not just children and pregnant women, but also women with breast or cervical cancer, the RSM teams continued to provide customers with timely, convenient and compassionate service.

Our numbers are up in almost every category this fiscal year, but I don't believe the 2003-2004 fiscal year can be characterized by numbers. The real triumph was in the commitment. Our staff stayed the course so hundreds of parents, children and cancer patients would have the reassurance of affordable and accessible health care. For that, I am very proud!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Anderson'.

Jon Anderson, Director
Right from the Start Medicaid
Outreach Project

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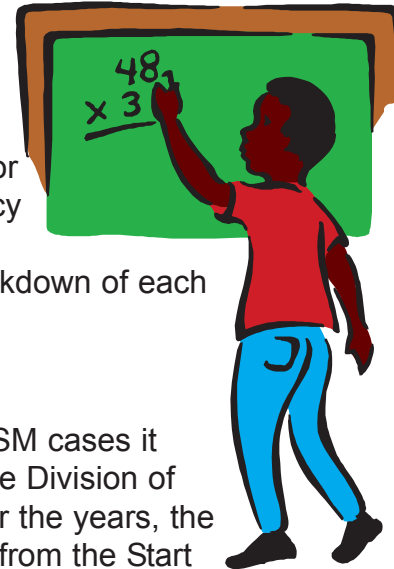


Division of Family and Children Services



Statistics

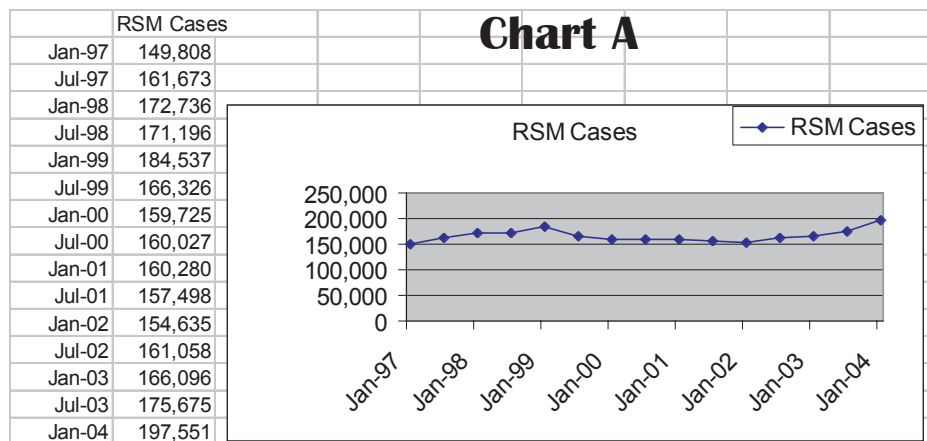
In the 2003-2004 fiscal year, the Right from the Start Medicaid (RSM) Outreach Project worked with various programs accepting RSM applications and screening or processing applications for Georgia Partnership for Caring, Foster Care Medicaid, Women's Health Medicaid and Emergency Medical Assistance. The total number of applications that were taken or assigned by the Project is 181,574. The following charts denote the breakdown of each category of applications.



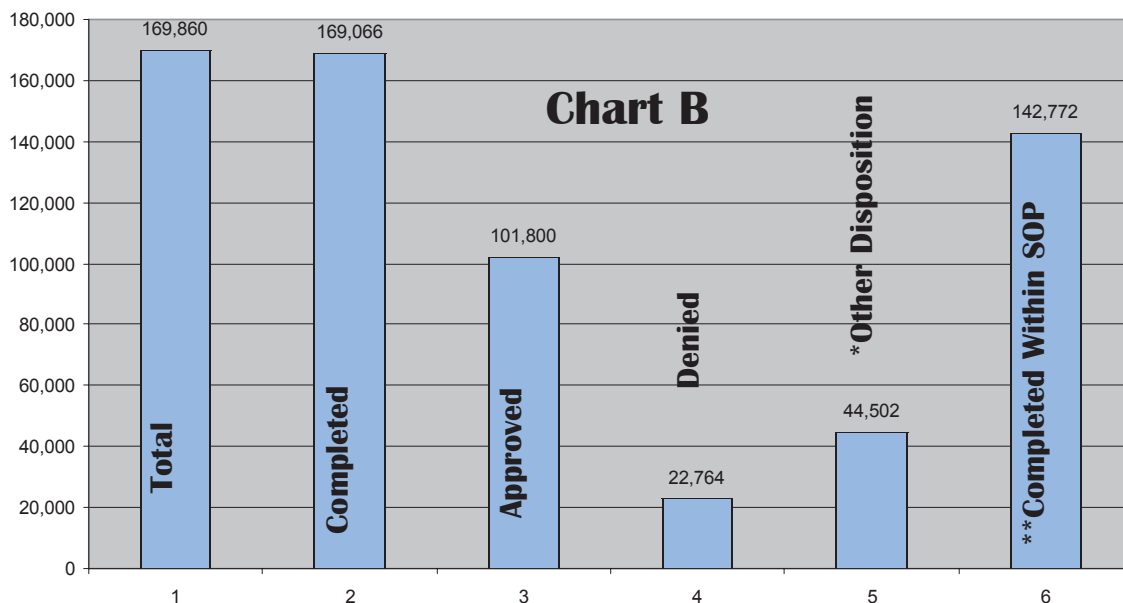
Right from the Start Medicaid

The Georgia Department of Human Resources tracked the number of RSM cases it opened since 1997. This figure is the compilation of cases handled by the Division of Family and Children Services, the RSM Project and other agencies. Over the years, the numbers have steadily risen. Chart A shows the number of active Right from the Start

Medicaid cases at the beginning (July) and midpoint (January) of each fiscal year since 1997. By midpoint of the 2003-2004 fiscal year, DHR accounted for as many as 197,551 active RSM cases. Chart B illustrates the number of RSM applications that were exclusively received by the RSM Project throughout that same fiscal year and the outcome of each of those applications.



Applications Taken or Assigned by the RSM Project 2003-2004



*Other Disposition = applications referred to DFCS or PeachCare for Kids, or pending.

**SOP = Standard of Promptness. Applications for pregnant women are dispositioned within 10 days of receipt of complete application, and applications for children are dispositioned within 45 days of receipt of complete application.

Right from the Start Medicaid Statistics

continued

Denied Applicants

The majority of applicants that were denied Medicaid were potentially eligible for PeachCare for Kids and were referred to that program, but there were at least 1,744 applicants who were over income and not likely eligible for PeachCare for Kids. The second most common reason for a denied applicant was citizenship. Non-citizens were given instruction on how to apply for emergency

medical assistance. Although this is not a long-term care or coverage program, this kind of assistance could cover the cost of labor and delivery as well as some other kinds of emergency care.

Most of the citizens who were denied RSM were referred to DFCS. Over 44,000 were asked to go to DFCS to see if they qualified for any other programs such as Low Income Medicaid, Adult Medicaid or Food Stamps.

Interviews

RSM eligibility specialists are not

required to meet with their clients face to face when they have a complete application. While 15,461 interviews were done in person, modern technology made it unnecessary to have a face-to-face interview with 170,650 applicants. This is a major convenience to RSM clients who are predominantly members of working families who are less likely to have their days free to go inside an RSM office.

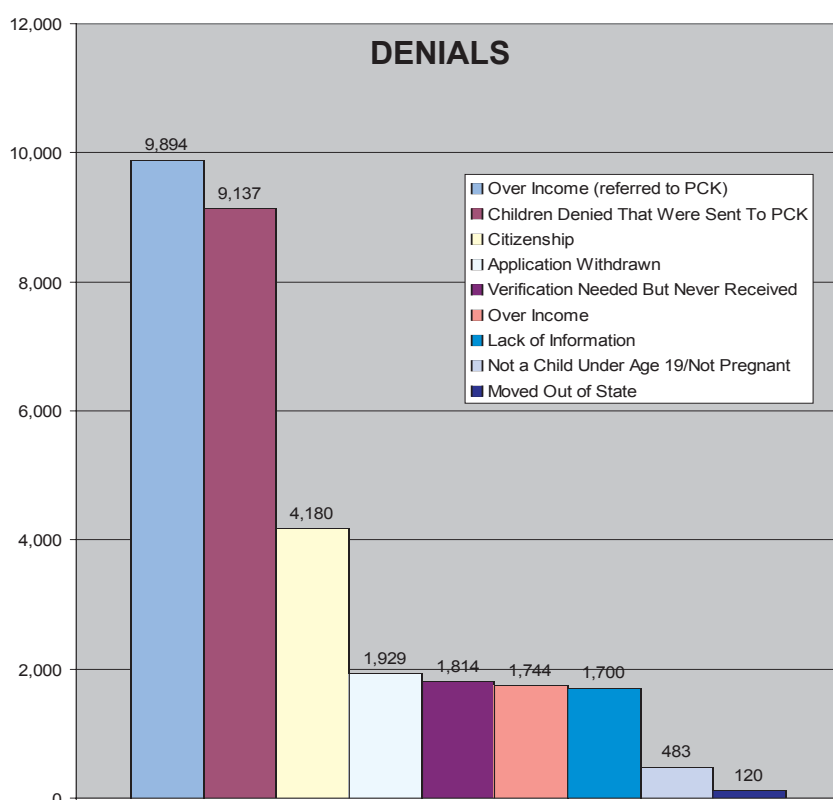
Nontraditional Hours

In an effort to go the extra mile to provide RSM customers with accessibility, specialists work nontradi-

tional hours. This strategy is used to ensure service to clients at hours prior to 8:00 a.m. and after 5:00 p.m. While workers were required to collectively work at least 40,087 nontraditional hours over the course of the year, they actually put in 56,363 hours of non-traditional time.

Reviews and Specials

Once an RSM worker completes processing a case, he or she forwards the case to DFCS. Occasionally, an RSM worker will have to hold onto a case longer than usual and may have to complete a six month or some other kind of review on the case. Of the 11 cases reviewed by RSM, 7 were certified and 4 were denied. Sometimes an RSM worker will have to make special changes to an already processed case, such as add a new address or a new family member, or transfer a case. Of the 23,983 special cases completed, 23,414 of the clients remained eligible, and 604 of the clients did not.



Women's Health Medicaid

Women under age 65, who have been diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer, may apply for Women's Health Medicaid at their local health department. This assistance covers the cost of treatment for those illnesses. Once a customer has applied for this program, their application is sent to the RSM Outreach Project for review. The project workers forward an acceptance or denial letter to inform the applicant of her status within the program. If the applicant is ineligible, the Medicaid eligibility worker will refer the applicant to the Cancer State Aid program and check to see if the applicant is potentially eligible for some other state agency program. This fiscal year, RSM took or were assigned 1,489 WHM applications. Ten of which were applications that had been pending from the prior year.

Foster Care

In 2002, the RSM Project added the RevMax (short for revenue maximization) Team to the roster. This team's focus was RSM applications for children in foster care. The team served counties statewide and were instrumental in assuring foster children did not lose their health care coverage as their county of residence fluctuated.

During the 2003-2004 fiscal year, the RevMax team completed 13,709 applications.

PeachCare for Kids

The PeachCare for Kids (PCK) program is Georgia's Child Health Insurance Program. It is a federally funded program to provide low-cost health insurance to children living in moderate-income households. While Georgians may apply for PCK by going online to www.peach-care.org, they may also obtain an application from an RSM staff member.

RSM applications for children who are over income for Medicaid are referred to PCK. Conversely, if an appli-

cant applies for PCK and is in fact potentially eligible for Medicaid, their application will get "kicked back" to RSM. RSM will then process the application to determine eligibility for Medicaid. Because Medicaid eligible applicants do not receive PCK funding, there are a great number of kick-backs a year. Another word often used to describe these applications is "rebound." Read more about rebounds on page 6. Below are the tallies of the work done by RSM on behalf of PCK:

Georgia

Rebounds	67,436
Presentations Made	2,636
Community Forums to Applicants	724
Community Trainings to Providers	29
Application Distribution	90,870
Application Assistance	17,980
Program Inquiries	64,140
Printed Material Distribution	283,957



Georgia Department of Human Resources Commissioner Beverly "BJ" Walker and Georgia Partnership for Caring Foundation Executive Director Tom Underwood.

Partnership for Caring

The Georgia Partnership for Caring Foundation (GPCF) is a private organization that serves the population of Georgians who have low income but are not eligible for Medicaid. The foundation works with pharmaceutical companies and doctors who donate their medicines and services so that qualified applicants can receive a free doctor visit and free prescription medicine. RSM accepts applications on behalf of this organization and screens the applicants first to see if they are eligible for Medicaid. Applications for persons who are likely eligible for GPCF are forwarded to the foundation. Below are the tallies for the work done by RSM on behalf of GPCF:

Applications Taken	7,312
Prescription Medicine Referrals	1,314

Emergency Medical Assistance

Georgian non-citizens do not qualify for Medicaid, however, they may apply for assistance to cover cost of emergency medical care. This would include coverage of the cost of labor



and

delivery which is the number one request RSM received from non-citizen customers.

The Project completed 8,134 applications for emergency medical assistance.

Case Activity

Basketball fan or not, most people can define **"rebound,"** but hardly anyone knows what it means better than an RSM eligibility specialist! Early on in the fiscal year, RSM began taking, printing, sorting and processing applications that were sent to them because

the applicant initially applied for PCK but was in fact potentially eligible for Medicaid. These cases used to get processed by Dental Health And Community Services, but due to some restructuring within the PCK camp, RSM stepped up to catch the "rebounds."

While the elimination of the middleman saved money, it also caused RSM case-loads to double, and in some cases triple. Keeping pace with the incoming applications required a group effort. Applications went to whichever team could handle the workload at the time which meant some teams were given applications that were for residents outside their coverage area. In order to alleviate confusion for customers receiving an acceptance or denial letter from a different county, RSM sent out an authorized letter to explain the procedure. Once processed, the applications were sent to the appropriate counties.

Part two of the new process was reporting. Fortunately, a tedious system of reporting updates was quickly rectified once RSM staff were trained on how to input updated data into the PCK automated system. MESS can now go into the PCK system to update household income as well as program eligibility status. Two other significant developments occurred in the month of February:

Feb 1- New income guidelines for federal poverty levels (FPLs) were issued. This is the customary time of year for these to be updated. However, specialists had to prepare for caseload-altering changes that would take effect July 1, 2004. For the first time in years, pregnant women and *newborns* (babies born to mothers on Medicaid) would no longer be eligible for Medicaid at 235 percent of the FPL. Their income would have to be at or below 200 percent of the FPL to qualify. For a family of four, this would mean that the family income limit was

about \$550 less than it had been the previous year.

Feb 18 - Income earmarked for a child (i.e. child support, SSI, etc) could no longer preclude eligibility for that child's sibling. Now all possible



assistance units/budget groups could be considered, including those where the siblings are put into different categories of assistance.



Achieving Our Goals

An Assessment of RSM's Outreach Efforts

The RSM Project sets specific goals each quarter that it works to achieve in order to assure excellence in the delivery of service to its customers. Much of the year was devoted to assuring over 67,000 applicants whose applications had been kicked back to RSM from PCK received prompt and quality service and getting eligible clients on Medicaid as seamlessly as possible. There was lots of attention also focused on reaching Georgia's uninsured children and pregnant women, and finding creative and productive ways to enhance this process. Listed below are the specific goals that were set for each quarter and an assessment of how RSM met these challenges.

July - August - September

Child Birth Classes



Director Jon Anderson admires RSM Trainer Jamie Anderson's newborn Eryn.

What better place to go to find soon-to-be moms than a childbirth or Lamaze class? For years, RSM has taken advantage of the opportunity to get valuable healthcare coverage information to pregnant women by making presentations at classes held on their behalf at health departments and hospitals. No team worked harder at this initiative than the Hall Team. Along with regular Lamaze classes, they attended sibling, newborn and child safety classes.

In just eight months, the Hall Team attended 34 and the Laurens Team attended 31 of these kinds of classes. In Gainesville, the Hall Team also regularly participated in a seminar called

Essentially for Women to provide information on RSM and other health-related programs. During the first quarter alone, the Gwinnett Team made eight visits to the center for Cobb Pregnancy Services.

Other teams were effective meeting this goal by participating in special events designed to connect with pregnant women. The Bulloch Team participated in a Baby Shower Extravaganza; the Clarke Team attended a Maternity and Baby Fair and the Laurens Team participated in the World Breastfeeding Awareness Week. Each quarter, the DeKalb Team attends the Celebration of Motherhood workshop for



Left to right: Cynthia Griffin, Terry New, Stephanie Boughner and Supervisor Don Jenkins of the Clayton Team assist a customer at the Clayton County Sensational Saturday.



Betsy Cox (far left) of the Carroll Team and Shad (4) watch as his brother David (6) casts his rod to fish for some school supplies. Melody Ford (top, right) makes sure he gets a catch. Carroll Team supervisor Melissa Wade said MES Angie Jones found the screen and came up with the great idea of creating the mock fishing expedition for their Back to School Outreach at LaGrange Mall.



moms-to-be at Grady Memorial Hospital's Grace Towns Hamilton Women's Pavillion. This unique workshop includes a tour of the hospital's Family Birth Center and Mother/Baby Care Center. Here, they get to introduce the mothers to the Medicaid program prior to their admittance to the hospital, which affords them the chance to remind mothers already on Medicaid that they can ensure coverage for their newborn with just a quick phone call to the change center (404-463-0039 or 1-888-295-1769) once their baby enters the world.



Some little stars came out to shine at Walmart Women's Health Fair in Camden County. Left to right: Jodi and Logan Perkins and Jessica Rayne.

Back-To-School Events

Tax Free Holiday

Community Initiatives

For details about these goals see Campaigns Section on page 12.

October-November-December

Holiday Outreach

Holidays bring families together! Subsequently, the festivities of the season also provide RSMers with opportunities to meet with families while they are relaxed and receptive to getting to know more about how to protect the health of their loved ones. The fall quarter is only second to spring in the number of outreach activities planned, and it is surely the most exciting time of year.

While there is no shortage of invitations to fall festivals, MESs generally use this time of year to host activities of their own. The Fulton Team coordinated their annual Winter Wonderland at Rosalie Wright headstart, and were able to provide free dental, vision and hearing screenings. Due to generous donations from the community, they were able to give away many coveted door prizes such as a DVD player, groceries and a weekend getaway. This team also hosted a Harvest Festival in Conyers and collaborated with Toys for Tots at Old Howard High School.

Not to be outdone, the Screven Team participated in an event for all

occasions: filled trick or treat bags for Halloween, distributed information at the Festival of Trees in Augusta, attended the Christmas Extravaganza in Sylvania, worked the Christmas on Liberty in Waynesboro and talked healthcare over pancakes at a Breakfast with Santa. The Paulding Team's activities were varied as well. They dressed up



The Fulton Team sponsored a Winter Wonderland and gave scores of families giveaways they could treasure such as a weekend getaway and a DVD player. The most valuable gift of all was free health care coverage to those who needed it.

for the annual Trick or Treat Village which had an attendance record of over 5,000. The team also reached out to families at a Fall Family Fun Night, an All Saints Day Festival in Dallas, and a Thanksgiving Lovefeast in Rome.

The fact that the holiday season is a time of giving is not lost on RSM. The staff take great delight in the opportunities to be charitable. The Paulding Team sponsored a Penny Day Sale at a nursing home in Haralson Co. The residents there were able to buy Christmas

presents for their friends for just a penny per item. Linda Bentley set a place for the weary at the Feed The Hungry event held by Bethany Church and the Paulding Resource Center. The Bibb Team helped the Jaycees in their area with a Christmas Wrapping event created to help foster children, the Clarke Team worked a Halloween carnival for children with diabetes, and the Lowndes Team rendered their services as judges for a Halloween door decorating contest.

When RSM held a display contest last year, a couple of teams won car magnets complete with the RSM logo and the RSM toll-free phone number. These magnets were put to good use because the teams



entered several holiday parades. Kelly Floyd of the Laurens Team decorated her husband's truck, loaded it with costumed kids and drove it in the Appling County Christmas Parade.

Christmas Parades

Team Parade

Bibb	Gray, GA Macon, GA
Bulloch	Pembroke, GA
Laurens	Appling County
Muscogee	Buena Vista, GA
	Schley County
Washington	Gray Jaycees in Milledgeville, GA
	Gordon, GA
	Shriner's in Swainsboro, GA



Energy Assistance

For some, the winter months conjure up thoughts of hot chocolate, apple cider and a crackling fireplace. Unfortunately, for others it conjures up fear; fear of not being able to afford the heating costs ahead. And many RSM clients have income levels that bring on this sense of insecurity. That's why MESs work to spread the word about the Low Income Heating Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). RSMers provided information pamphlets to their clients whose income is at or below 150% of the

poverty line.

Make A Difference Day

See section on Campaigns on page 12.

The RSM annual training conference was held in October in Macon. Lowndes Team Supervisor Phillip Kilgore got a chance to show off his new son while his team gathered 'round to take a peek.

January - February - March



Debbie Avant of the Washington Team referred some of her callers to the PeachCare for Kids Web site so that they could apply for PeachCare for Kids online.

Web Site Referrals

The RSM Web site was launched in 2001, but there was a hiatus in its development this year due to the construction of a new state web portal. The new system will streamline the appearance of state agency sites and simplify the retrieval of information. RSM PR section has been working with the web masters to get the new RSM site redesigned and running by the end of the 2004. RSM teams focused on the following tasks to achieve their web site goal:

1) Encourage businesses and organizations to put a link on their web page to the RSM Web site



Left to Right: RSM Director Jon Anderson, Whitfield Team MES Karen Deaver, North Area Manager Robin Walden, Whitfield Team Supervisor Barbara Thomas, at Deaver's work site in Mineral Bluff.

2) Get RSM PSAs posted on other agency sites

3) Do web searches to learn about resources that may be beneficial to RSM clients

4) Promote the PCK Web site and assist clients with the online application

5) Refer RSM clients to sites that would be of interest and value.

www.gacares.org

www.medicare.gov

www.thebreastcancer-site.com

www.dhrjobs.com

www.covertheuninsured-week.org

www.odis.dhr.state.ga.us

www.ghp.georgia.gov

www.peachcare.org

Earned Income Tax Credit

See section on campaigns on page 12

PeachCare For Kids Rebounds

See pages 5 and 6.

Customer Service

Excellent customer service is always a goal for RSM staff, one that is often met because the staff genuinely care

April-May-June



Sharon Duke (pictured center in customer service class) has been with the project since it first began. She said that although she is a veteran, she will "always be able to learn new ways to provide better customer service." "I think [customer service] is one of the things RSM is really good at."

about the welfare of their clients. But the teams' ability to sustain such a high level of quality was put to the test this year because of the increased workload (some, up three times the usual). Many of the workers participated in a customer service class and customer service was set as a goal for a quarter to ensure, despite adversity, the teams never took their eye off the ball.

Here are a few examples that illustrate how RSM remained at the top of their game:

Maria Walker of the Bibb Team met a client at Flint River Hospital in

Montezuma. The mother's newborn developed fluid in the brain and became hydrocephalic two weeks after birth.

Maria processed EMA for the Hispanic mom and provided the baby, a U.S. citizen, with Newborn Medicaid. Walker translated for the client at the DFCS office so the mother could also get food stamps. Walker also traveled to assist Maria with

translations at the client's gynecologist appointment. Upon learning the baby would be going home to a home of empty cupboards, Maria took up a collection from organizations and individuals and provided the family with an electric heater, gas money for trips to the hospital, and food and clothing.

"I continue to help this family any way that I can, they are "my special family," said Maria. It is important to me that I help this family and many other Hispanic families that do not have anyone else, especially to help with communication." as of July 2004, the new-



Audrey Dye (left) and Isabel Pacheco of the DeKalb Team provide members of the Hispanic Community with information during the Dia de la Mujer.

born was recovering. She may have mild retardation and has a hemangioma, a vascular growth between her eyes, but is otherwise a healthy baby.

While trying to fill a prescription, the Griffins learned that their health

insurance had been cancelled. While Mr. Griffin had been employed, the insurance company had authorized open-heart surgery for their two-year-old son Jacob. Jacob suffered from subaortic stenosis, a condition that leads to membrane growth over the aortic valve, hindering blood flow from the heart. "The doctors told us [the blood circulation through the valve] was down to the size of a pencil," said Mrs. Griffin. The Griffins considered selling their van to pay for one month's coverage of COBRA which would have cost about \$1,100. "Even if we had sold our vehicle it wouldn't have been enough," said Mrs. Griffin. Feeling desperate, the Griffins contacted Jodi Isley of the Washington Team, the MES who had put their older children on PeachCare for Kids a couple of years earlier. Since Mr. Griffin was not eligible for unemployment, the Griffins' family income was within the eligibility range for Jacob to receive Medicaid. "When Mr. Griffin came by my office to pick up his temporary card, you could tell the weight of the world had been lifted," said Isley. Isley made a personal visit

to the hospital to check on Jacob's status. "As the mother of a child Jacob's age, it touched my heart to see his smile and know that RSM had helped this child and family," stated Isley.

Clark Team's supervisor received a letter from a mother of four who was expecting a fifth. "While dealing with Mr. [Ron]Smith," wrote the client, "he was completely professional, helpful and respectful

could to help," wrote the client. "I felt it was necessary to send this

letter to thank you, Ron, and your department for restoring my faith in the system."

Shirley Richards, a single mother, sent Bonnie Taylor and Eliana Campo of the Gwinnett Team a dozen roses each. She had been paying for healthcare out of pocket and realized she had reached her financial limitation when she discovered her 11-year-old daughter needed surgery.

The receptionist in her daughter's doctor office referred her to RSM. Ms. Richards was impressed with the quality of service she received and overjoyed with gratitude. "Taylor may not have been able to have children without this surgery," said Richards. "Bonnie and Eliana were a

Godsend."

Gwennell Strong, RSM main office program assistant, assisted a customer even though she woke her up in the middle of the night. A wrong number turned into the right number when Gretchen Jaudon called Ms. Strong's phone number by mistake. After a brief discussion, Ms. Strong asked Ms. Jaudon to give her a call at the office the following morning. Ms. Jaudon complied and Ms. Strong was able to direct the client to GPCF for assistance, and mailed her an application for the program right away. "It was fantastic," said Ms. Jaudon, "I told her my situation and she got right on it."

Customer and Provider Education

At the 2003-2004 annual development conference MESSs were trained on a litany of topics and returned to their respective areas



The Paulding Team often participates in March of Dimes Walks: Starting top left, clockwise: Supervisor Sheila Alexander warms up; Jan Thompson and Kimberly Hamilton hand out information and nifty supplies; A mother and three of her quadruplets, the grand marshals for the day; Alexander finishes the walk.



Quarterly, representatives from RSM teams attend a Worker's Voice meeting. The representatives meet with the director to express their concerns and generate ideas to improve work relations. Pictured here are Lawrence Valentino of the Dougherty Team (far left), Thomas Meyer of the Laurens Team (background), Jodi Isley of the Washington Team (second from right), and Stacey Thompson of the Clarke Team (far right).

to me and my needs." Mr. Smith worked to unscramble a set of records so that they would reflect the true unit of children from the client and her husband's former marriages. Despite the two-hour process, "Mr. Smith was smiling and doing everything he



Sheila Baddeley (right), Social Work Services secretary in Athens, said Lindy Holcomb of the Clarke Team "is a joy to work with." She said she confidently refers her clients who need health care coverage to Holcombe.



Cheryl Gray of the Laurens Team often dresses up as Patty Cake the Clown to capture the children's interest as she did here at the Be a Hero Adoption Festival.

to put their new or renewed knowledge to work. MESs weren't the only ones who needed to be educated. It was important for the teams to make their communities aware of the income limit changes and procedural changes to Medicaid and PeachCare. It was particularly important to emphasize the importance of PCK clients to keep their premiums current. Clients would no longer have the grace period they once had when they fell short of their payment commitments and they would have to endure a three-month "lock-out" if they allowed their coverage to lapse. Here are some examples of how RSM staffers kept their clients informed.

A pregnant customer's new found knowledge about Social Security paved the way to a much less stressful pregnancy. She had been receiving SSI due to a disability until the death of her husband. Although her daughter remained eligible for Medicaid, the increase in income from Social Security surviving spouse benefits made

the mother ineligible for SSI and Medicaid. Knowing how expensive prenatal care can be, Cheryl Gray, a Laurens Team MES, was relieved when her super sleuthing

revealed a pot of gold. As the customer pondered how she would be able to afford her prenatal care, Gray called the Social Security Administration to make sure the client had complete information and understanding of her benefits. The SSA explained that a survivor's benefit payment was not only going to the mother each month, but an equal payment was going into a savings account for her daughter each month. The mother was elated to discover she had access to money she didn't previously know existed.

Tina Murphey of the Gwinnett Team helped a family of immigrants understand their benefit rights and directed them to other resources that would possibly be able to assist them. A husband hung his head as he explained to Murphey his pregnant wife was not a documented citizen. Murphey recognized the pressure the man was feeling and told him to relax as she explained that his wife could receive emergency medical assistance for labor and delivery of their child.

Murphey, known for her cerebral library of resources, directed the client to a doctor that could offer him sliding scale fees for ongoing services. The client was so relieved he cried.

"I was so impressed," Joseph Drewry said of Fulton Team MES Jean Pittman. Drewry was pleased with the professional assistance he received in his efforts to get his grandchildren healthcare coverage. Especially for four-year-old Taylor who had three open heart surgeries and two angioplasties. Mr. and Mrs. Drewry had recently moved to Georgia and although they knew a little about the SCHIP program in Indiana, they needed guidance on navigating his way into the Georgia Medicaid and PCK system. Pittman was not only able to provide sound guidance on the applica-



Director Jon Anderson welcomes a set of neophytes at the new worker training class in May 2004. RSM Trainer Jamie Anderson (standing in the back) listens along with the class.

tion process, but was able to provide the Drewrys with a list of nearby doctors who accept Medicaid. The Drewrys expressed great appreciation for the help his family received and even gave a testimonial about his experience with RSM at the Cover the Uninsured Week Prayer Breakfast. "I wish everyone in government were just like Jean," said Mr. Drewry.

Campaigns

RSM teams strive to cover as much ground as possible in their outreach efforts. They accept invitations to set up display tables at local events, establish a positive rapport with their local community officials and organizations, make pre-

sentations at schools, work places and other venues where they might run into someone who is in need of health care coverage but has



Joseph Drewry (middle) said he was tremendously pleased with the service he received from Right from the Start Medicaid staff when he called to get help for Taylor (left), a survivor of three open-heart surgeries. Mr. and Mrs. Drewry (far right) were seeking health care coverage for their grandchildren, Taylor and little Joseph (middle), after acquiring guardianship and moving to Georgia from Indiana.

Campaigns

modest means to pay for it. But instead of waiting for those opportunities to arrive, RSM proactively seeks those in need by participating in campaigns at the local, state and national levels.

Back-to-School

Teams often collaborate with Covering Kids and Families during the spring and fall, the seasons for school registering and school shopping. Covering Kids and Families, supported by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, annually provides marketing tools and information for healthcare proponents to court the attention of expectant moms and other parents. RSM teams use these resources to capture interested audiences and disseminate information on the benefit programs RSM supports.

RSM teams attended over 100 parent-teacher organization meetings, school registrations and open house sign-ups. Teams made presentations to local school nurses and some worked with the school nurse to determine students in need of low-cost health care

coverage, and get Medicaid applications to those individuals' homes. The Bulloch



During Make A Difference Day, youthful residents of the Thomasville Heights area in Atlanta lined up against the wall to see if their number would be called for the raffle. Most of them hoped to get one of the free backpacks or pair of tennis shoes.

Team was able to talk with nurses from all across the state at the Georgia Association of School Nurses Conference in Savannah and allowed



Andrea Portman of the Hall Team paints a precious face at the Banks County Back To School Festival.

the nurses to ask questions of them one-on-one. The Bulloch Team also partnered with the local Covering Kids and Families and Department of Family and Children Services to reach out to the area school system.

There are numerous school districts and systems in Georgia and each RSM team has to establish a relationship with the systems in

their regions so that they can figure out the best way to get information to the parents of the students. One of the most effective processes has been to

use the school's free lunch applications as an indicator of who may be potentially eligible for Medicaid.

However, some school systems have a universal reduced lunch program and does not need parents to complete applications to get those benefits. In those kinds of cases, the RSM teams try to work with education organizations like the Carroll Team did with their Board of Education School Counselors. Some teams work with the local shops just as the Bibb Team did when they participated in Wal-Mart's Operation



Michelle McNeely of the Bulloch Team talked to K-mart shoppers about earned income credit and child tax credit while they shopped for tax-free school supplies during the state's tax-free holiday. This proved to be an opportune time to discuss healthcare coverage programs also.

Back to School. Some other unique efforts include the Fulton Team taking part in the My Sister's House fundraising event that donated school supplies and clothes to the needy, and the Clayton Team attending a Back-to-School Prayer Rally in Jonesboro.

Tax

Georgia's Tax Free Holiday 2003 was held July 31 to August 3. RSM teams capitalized on this opportunity to approach parents who were out doing some back to school shopping for their children. MESs told parents that the stores weren't the only place they could get a bargain. They explained that affordable healthcare coverage is available for children and pregnant women with low to moderate income, and that those who fall within the Medicaid and PCK eligibility ranges are likely to qualify for the earned income tax and child tax credits.

During the tax season, RSMers hand out tax publications to the attendees at their events and the clients in their offices. Customers are provided with basic information that can help them determine whether they should consider the tax credit options.

Community Initiatives

The RSM Community Initiatives campaign was born in 2003 to seize the opportunity to take RSM's groundwork research and use it in a positive, charitable format. The teams have been interacting with their communities on a grassroots level for over ten years. Their work has been extraordinarily effective in part due to the close connections and networks they have built. As skilled professionals who have earned the respect and trust of their communities, they have frequently been called upon by other agencies and organizations to share their expertise and to act as informal liaisons between



Brenda Roberts and Holly Dirst of the Screven Team talk with a customer at the Sylvania Sampler in Augusta.

of concern in their coverage areas and selected innovative ways to address them. Outside of the holiday outreach events, the Community Initiative campaign turned out to be one of the most philanthropic successes of the fiscal year.

The Laurens Team tackled adult literacy and contacted agencies in their counties to learn about available programs. They went to adult literacy classes and shared information about Georgia Partnership for

Caring. Because of the growing Hispanic population in their areas, the Bulloch and Lowndes Teams did outreach at local stores and community forums where Hispanic farm workers were

given clothes, toiletries and other donated items. The Washington Team promoted women's health. In addition to participating in a women's health fair in Milledgeville, they commemorated the event by distributing pink bows to OB-GYN offices and

leaving behind a wealth of information on the Medicaid, PCK and Women's Health Medicaid programs. The Screven Team researched the drug, vision and dental programs in their region and passed along their findings to their RSM customers. Areas of emphasis by other teams included child safety, children's health, and distribution of free school supplies to the underprivileged.

Make A Difference Day

For four consecutive Octobers, RSM has supported USA Weekend Magazine and the Points of Light Foundation's Make A Difference Day campaign. The mission of this campaign is to inspire people to be good stewards by doing something to help their fellow citizens. On October 25, 2003, RSM simultaneously participated in nearly 40 events statewide. The Clarke team set up Medicaid information booths in seven locations while the Hall and Washington teams collectively worked in 10 different venues. Many teams received support from local retailers in their areas who authorized RSMers to set up display tables in their stores so that customers could receive free information about government-funded healthcare benefit programs for those with modest

means.

RSM joined forces with the Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (GCAPP) and the City of Atlanta Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs to offer a day of food, fun and empowerment to the Thomasville Heights community. Sixty-one percent of the residents there live in poverty. Over half the male population between 18 and 24 have less than a high school education. And the black



While Dennis Magsby (right) and Barbara Hightower of the Fulton Team worked to provide an impoverished community with information about health care programs, at the Thomasville Heights Make a Difference Day Festival, they also talked with legislatures and civic leaders that came to the event to show their support.

those agencies and the community.

Because RSMers are so familiar with their territory, they are able to determine the most ardent priorities within the communities they serve. For this initiative, each of the teams pinpointed issues



Cynthia Johnson of the Muscogee Team had a good time at the Old Thyme Fair in Preston. She helped Webster County Georgians celebrate Make A Difference Day.

females in the area are twice as likely to drop out of high school in comparison to other parts of the city. RSMers were able to make a difference in the lives of these residents by bringing various agencies to one central location. In one day, at one place, residents were able to apply for Medicaid or PeachCare for Kids, register to vote, ask questions about Food Stamps and Energy Assistance, and learn how to detect symptoms of von Willebrand disease or lead poisoning. Parents were able to get their blood pressure checked or talk one-on-

one with legislatures while their kids got their faces painted or jumped around in a spacewalk.

Cover the Uninsured Week

Cover the Uninsured



RSM Director Jon Anderson (front, far right), RSM team members and members of the metro area Cover the Uninsured Week Coalition displayed their support for uninsured Georgians on the steps of the state capital.

Week is a national endeavor sponsored by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, to promote awareness and encourage support for the plight of the 44 million Americans who do not have health insurance coverage. RSM worked on the planning committee for the Atlanta coalition for this campaign in 2003, and became the leading coordinator of the coalition in 2004. In both years, RSM teams set up display areas in health departments and at local events to help distribute health care coverage information and to highlight the campaign throughout the entire state.

The Atlanta coalition collaborated with Wholistic Stress

Control Institute and the Adamsville Recreation Center to pull off a largely successful health and resource fair. Over 40 exhibitors distributed free snacks, goods, services and health-

related information. Volunteers from all over the Atlanta area came out to do screenings; from diabetes, glucose and blood pressure checks to dental, chiropractic and vision screenings. There was information on a range of ailments, diseases and medical conditions, particularly those that are prevalent in the minority community such as breast cancer, hemophilia, diabetes and sickle cell. Health fair guests were given resource pamphlets on information regarding elderly care and on child safety. The fair was a huge collaborative effort with participation from neighboring hospitals, the fire department, college students, legislatures, senior citizens

groups, healthcare professionals and small businesses.

Preceding the health fair, the Atlanta coalition hosted a powerful prayer breakfast that served local health care providers and community members. Speakers for the breakfast and the health fair kick-off included State Representative Sally Harrell, activist and former representative Rita Valenti, Aetna Southern Regional Medical Director Dr. Bill Hauser, DeKalb County Commissioner Larry Johnson, Interfaith Children's Movement of Metro Atlanta Executive Director Maressa Pendermon and Pastor of First Iconium Baptist Church, Reverend Timothy McDonald.

Other Cover the Uninsured Week activities included a fundraiser and a proclamation signing. Governor Sonny Perdue signed a proclamation devoting a week to the uninsured in Georgia. It states that "The State of Georgia understands the urgency of this nationwide dilemma and is helping out by raising awareness of the problem, working to educate the public and provide assistance to the

uninsured and small business owners..." The proclamation was framed and showcased at the health fair. In conjunction with the campaign, the Atlanta coalition also sponsored a fundraiser called "A Picture of Health" to raise money for the Georgia Partnership for Caring Foundation. RSM's goal for this campaign was three-fold:

1. To make sure those who are uninsured, but are eligible for health care programs find out about those programs and get access to apply for them.
2. To get policymakers and Georgia citizens energized about helping those who go without health care coverage.
3. To educate the faith community about the moral imperative of health care coverage, and provide them with resources and tool kits that they can share with their local congregations.



Left to right: Tom Underwood, executive director of Georgia Partnership for Caring Foundation; Rita Valenti, registered nurse and health care activist; Kym Crooms, RSM public relations and information specialist and coordinator of the Georgia Cover the Uninsured Week coalition; and Sally Harrell, Georgia state representative (dist-54)

State Office Support Staff

Achieving our goals would not be possible without our support staff



Kym Crooms
Public Relations and
Information Specialist



Gail Hambrick
Resource Coordinator



Doris Newkirk
Program Assistant/DEO



Gwen Strong
Program Assistant



Eugene Vas
Statistical Analyst

Media Outreach/Publications



RSM Director Jon Anderson answered questions about Medicaid and PeachCare for Kids during a taping of an episode of Tu Vida TV. The interview aired in Spanish with English subtext.

RSM reaches thousands of people each year at festivals, civic meetings, schools, health departments, day care centers and other family-friendly venues. While this is an advantageous way to meet people and have one-on-one "Q & A" conversations, the staffers can't be at all places at all times. Therefore, they enlist the help of the media. The media is used to spread the word about health benefit programs and to help advertise events and locations where people can go to talk with an RSM specialist.

Sometimes the project will luck up and a big

news or radio station will just show up and put one of the team members on camera and/or microphone. However, most often RSMers get their message out through hard work, delivering public service announcements and flyers, making phone calls and networking. For example, Bulloch team members Rose Nelson and Delores Graves-David worked as volunteers for the Lupus Awareness Council. Their collaborative efforts landed them on the WGML-AM 990 radio show. Rosalind Smith, leader of the Lupus Group, hosts the show and invited Nelson and Graves-David to come on the air to discuss Medicaid, PCK and other programs supported by RSM. They have since made encore appearances on the show.

The public relations department sends out

press releases, initiates and coordinates campaigns and event bookings, develops print material and writes newsletters. This year, the RSM newsletter and quarterly reports were consolidated and revised. The new publications are called RSM Times and they are designed to appeal to both the RSM staff members as well as outside collaborative agencies that are interested in the work RSM is doing. A couple of columns were added such as the "Bulletin Board" which highlights community happenings that affect RSM clients and the "In the News" section which helps to keep RSM Times readers abreast of current events as they relate to the health care of children, pregnant women and others in need of health care coverage.

Also recorded in these publications are statistical data and lists of outreach activities performed by each of the teams. The newsletter frequently highlights MES interaction with customers, and how they have made a difference in the lives of their clients.



The RSM managers and supervisors really got into the act as they rehearsed for their production (photos top and middle). They put on a skit (above) for the rest of the project members, during the once-a-year annual training.

Media Coverage Continued

Below are lists of media outlets that provided RSM with air, space or run time. The numbers indicate the number of times used if more than once.

Radio

WACO 100 (Washington Co.) - 2
WAMJ (Atlanta)
WCKS (Waco)
WCLA (Claxton)
WCOH (Newnan) - 6
WCON (Cornelia)
WGAA (Cedartown) - 11
WGML (Hinesville)
WIFO (Jesup)
WJIZ (Albany)
WLOP (Jesup)
WMAZ (Macon) - 2
WQVC
WZOT (Rockmart) - 9

Television

CATV 3 (Savannah)
Charter Communications Cable TV (Cedartown) - 9
East Point Government Channel (East Point)
South West 24 (Atlanta)
Tu Vida TV 22/Comcast 5 (Atlanta)
W35BB 35 (Dublin)
WALB (Albany) - 4
WALB (Moultrie) - 2
WMAZ 13 (Macon)
WMAZ 13 (Warner Robins) - 3
WNEG 32 (Gainesville)
WSB 2 (Atlanta)
WSST (Smithville) - 2
WSST (Warwick)
WTOC 11 (Jesup)
WTVM 9 (Columbus) - 3
WXIA 11 (Atlanta)

Print

Albany Herald (Albany) - 3
Albany Herald (Baconton)
Americus Observer (Americus)
Anderson Independent (Lavonia)
Baldwin Bulletin (Milledgeville)
Banks County News (Homer)
Beacon Newsletter (Cedartown)
Bremen Gateway Beacon (Bremen) - 4
Bryan County News (Pembroke) - 2
Cedartown Standard (Cedartown)
Chattanooga Times Free Press (Dalton)
Claxton Enterprise (Claxton)
Clinch Shopper (Valdosta)
Courier Herald (Dublin)
Dallas New Era (Dallas)
Dodge County Newspaper (Eastman)
Dublin Courier Herald (Dublin) - 2
Family Connection Newsletter
Griffin Daily News (Griffin)
Harbor Sound (Brunswick)
Metro Augusta Parent calendar (Augusta)
Newnan Times-Herald (Newnan) - 7
North Georgia News (Blairsville) - 2
Press-Sentinel (Jesup) - 3
Rockmart Journal (Cedartown)
Rome News Tribune (Rome)
South Georgia Technical College Newspaper (Columbus)
Statesboro Herald (Metter)
Tallapoosa Journal (Tallapoosa)
True Citizen (Sardis) - 2
Times Georgian (Carrollton)
Union Recorder (Milledgeville) - 4
Valdosta Daily Times (Valdosta)
Waynesboro True Citizen (Waynesboro) - 5
West Central Tech newsletter (Waco)

Web Sites

*There was a link to RSM site or an advertisement of an RSM event on the site.

www.actorsfund.org (Actor's Health Insurance Resource Center)
www.CareerDepot.org
www.coveringkidsandfamilies.org
www.covertheuninsuredweek.org
www.diadelamujerlatina.org
www.Georgianurses.org (Georgia Nurses Association)

www.healthcoverageatlanta.com/medicaid
www.health.state.ga.us/programs/bcw/resources.asp (Babies Can't Wait)
www.mountaincountryradio.com/communitycalendar.ivnu
www.msm.edu (Morehouse School of Medicine)

Historical Overview

T I M E L I N E

In 1993, the Georgia Department of Community Health and the Georgia Department of Human Resources contractually agreed to create the Right from the Start Medicaid (RSM) Outreach Project. The project was expected to be a temporary entity charged with the mission of spreading the word about the state's Medicaid benefit program for children and pregnant women. At the time, Georgia had a high infant mortality rate - 10.5 deaths per every 1,000 live births - and then Governor Zell Miller supported

the project as a way to address the issue.

From 1992 to 1997 the number of Georgia's infant deaths dropped 17.3 percent. By 2000 Georgia had 8.5 infant deaths per 1,000 births. While this was a far cry from the past (the ratio was 12.4 in 1990), there was - and still is - much work to be done in order to accomplish RSM's mission: to enable children and pregnant women to receive comprehensive health services through Right from the Start Medicaid and related programs.

To achieve success, RSM reached out to communities by outstationing teams statewide in areas that would be accessible to low-to-moderate income families. Teams set up offices in health departments, churches, schools, libraries, apartment complexes and other community-friendly venues; opened early and stayed late. They made sure they were open during nontraditional work hours in order to make their services easily accessible to working parents. The teams partnered with community groups, made presenta-

tions to explain RSM and taught the agencies how to make referrals. They attended events sponsored by other agencies and learned about their services in order to make proper referrals

In the early years, RSM did a lot of "sidewalk" stumping. But once the agencies became familiar with the project, it became easier for RSM to focus on talking directly with customers. RSM staff members earned a reputation for being professional, creative, compassionate, and hard working. It wasn't long before eligibility specialists' mailboxes

1993

Rate of infant deaths in Georgia 10.5 per every 1,000 live births. Department of Medical Assistance (later named Department of Community Health) and the Department of Human Resources agrees to create Right from the Start Medicaid (RSM) Outreach Project.

1993

Becky Shoaf is named the director of RSM.

The RSM Project outstations teams into communities statewide and Medicaid eligibility specialists (MES) are required to do outreach and process RSM applications.

1994

RSM holds a one-day conference in Atlanta. The Project has taken 23,484 applications for the year. Nearly 200 outreach staff are hired to identify and certify children up to age 19 and pregnant women for Medicaid.

1995

RSM begins to collaborate with the Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (GCAPP). Nearly 40,000 applications are processed by the end of the fiscal year. The annual conference is held in Macon. The theme is "Accept the Challenge."

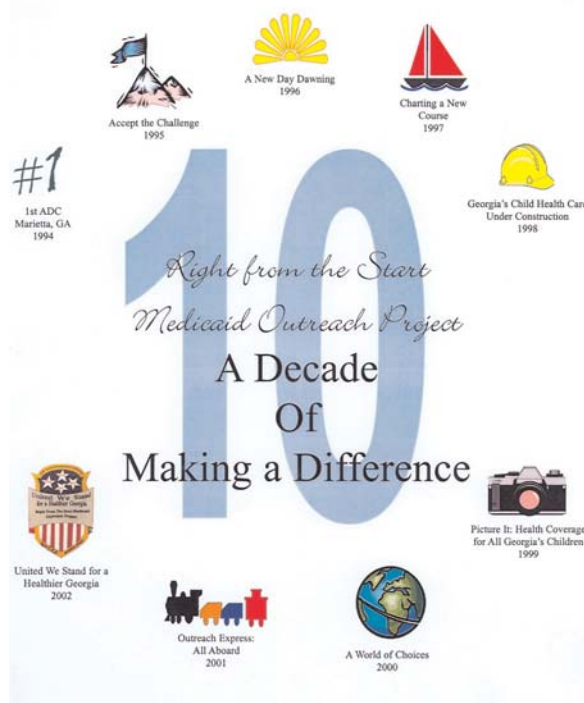
were overflowing with invitations to participate in community events. Their calendars were filled with appointments to set up displays and do presentations at health fairs, festivals, parent teacher meetings and other civic gatherings. Eligibility specialists got to know the people well, and in turn, the local residents felt comfortable going to RSM to apply for Medicaid.

In RSM's third year, the project broadened its goals. The director at the time, Rebecca Shoaf, set out to take advantage of the momentum RSM had created and used it to help bolster the teen pregnancy prevention campaign in Georgia. The collaborative partnership between Georgia Campaign Against Pregnancy

Prevention (GCAPP) and RSM was a logical step because a large proportion of Georgia's teenage moms received

fore would have been more likely to have a low birth weight baby or have to cope with an infant death.

who applied for benefits because not everyone who applied met the eligibility requirements. In 1996, the project expanded its collaborative role and joined forces with the Georgia Partnership for Caring Foundation, Inc. This non-profit, private organization matches medical providers and pharmacies willing to donate their services or medicines with people who are indigent and uninsured but who are also not eligible for government benefit programs such as Medicaid. Because the foundation's services are not limited to women and children, it is a great referral source for men. The significance of this is particularly profound when one considers the great disparity in healthcare for



Medicaid during their pregnancy, and put their children on Medicaid after their birth. Many of the young mothers would not have been able to receive prenatal care without this service, and there-

After having processed nearly 40,000 applications in 1995, it had become clear that there were many Georgians in need of health care coverage. However, RSM could not help all those

1996

GCAPP is named RSM's private partner by Governor Zell Miller. RSM receives Baby Think It Over Dolls to incorporate teen pregnancy prevention into presentations. The dolls are life-size baby simulators that are activated by a computer chip recording the babies' cries.

1996

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act known as Welfare Reform is signed into law by Clinton administration. What had been known as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) is now called Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF).

1996

The RSM Annual Conference is held in Augusta and the theme is "A New Day Dawning." The Project takes 51,076 applications for the fiscal year. The Project presents its first Supervisor of the Year award to Shannon Patterson and Worker of the Year Award to Bobbie McMurray.

1997

Infant deaths in Georgia are down by 17.3 percent. The RSM Project takes in 63,668 applications. The annual conference is held in Macon. The theme this year is "Charting a New Course."